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## Soweto Day Commemoration in Detroit "Stop the Violence, Promote the Peace"

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**Notes for a Talk to MCHR, Soweto Day Commemoration in Detroit**  
**"Stop the Violence, Promote the Peace"**  
**June 16, 1993**

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I. Foreword

I am delighted to be with you again. The fact that today is June 16 reminds me of the formidable task that I face. For June 16 is not just the commemoration of Soweto Day. It is also the anniversary of the Mueda Massacre in Mozambique. In South Africa, the United Nations estimates that over one thousand mostly young people were shot and killed in 1976. In Mozambique in 1960 over 500 Mozambicans were shot and killed as they peacefully protested. So today I must be a bit like, no I must resemble Toni Morrison, Gwendolyn Brooks and Maya Angelou in assuming the pose of WORDSMYTH.

II. Introduction  
Global Changes

The 1990's opened with cataclysmic changes taking place in the international environment. They have been changes that have drastically altered the way in which the average citizen, policy makers, presidents, and scholars view the world. The most dramatic of these changes has been the end of the Communist Party leadership in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and the disintegration of that form of governance into a host of small independent and noncommunist states. Equally pivotal has been the demise of single party governments pursuing alternative, noncapitalist modes of development in various parts of the Third World nations of Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and the Pacific and their replacement by democratization movements. The Iran-Contra War, the invasion of Panama, and U.S.-run mopping-up exercises, often through surrogate armies in places ranging from Angola to Nicaragua and Vietnam to Mozambique, contributed mightily to the process of eliminating any polities that might provide a successful alternative model to development patterned after the McDonald's/Disneyland dream.



With these two critical changes have come several important parallel changes. First is the decline of the United States as the world's hegemonic economic super power and the rise of Japan. Secondly, the growing strength of an increasingly integrated Europe but a Europe increasingly torn apart at the same time by dramatic ethnic and religious conflicts. Thirdly, the emergence of a resuscitated United Nations, but one largely run by the political will of the United States. As is vividly illustrated in the UN's sanctioning of the 1990 Gulf War conducted by the United States and its allies and also seen in the UN debacle in Somalia which is now vintage "made in the USA." And fourthly, Africa and Africa-related issues have been relegated to beyond the periphery of the periphery as the world's attention is basically now focused on Europe and the former Soviet Union with only an occasional venture south to exotic places like Somalia. This process is going on while inside Africa itself is a marvelous and dynamic process of democratization, mass struggle and the mushrooming of grassroots and popular political participation. Even Borda and Mobutu are on the way out!

## II. Changes in the United States

We have a new president after 12 years of Reagan/Bush administration. But sometimes "the more things change, the more they stay the same." In March of 1992 the Chronicle of Higher Education reported that in 1989 90 more than twice the number of young black men in college programs (476,000) were in prison, jail, probation or on parole (1,024,370).

Last November the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives made a finding--one that I think is typical--that in the city of Baltimore, on any given day, 56% of young African American males were involved in some aspect of the criminal justice system other than in the employment mode.

Unemployment, tuberculosis, homicide rates, divorce and abuse rates, all of these phenomena are at record levels in black inner city and poor rural communities. I think what is happening in inner city USA today is ethnic cleansing--American style [the more things change, the more they stay the same.]!! Or looking from some different angles (mixing the foreign and the domestic) the whole question of the Clinton administration's actions or inactions towards Haiti points to some basic continuities in US foreign policy which are rooted in a simple age old proposition: "if you're black step back!"

On Africa: Is the Clinton administration doing new stuff? Despite recognition of Angola, for me, the jury is still out. Despite speeches like Lake's May 3 talk, and I quote:

Lake said the choice of Africa as the topic for his first speech since being named the president's chief



foreign policy adviser in the White House was intentional. "There has been a sense that some administrations have taken years to figure out where Africa is on the map," he said. The Clinton team not only knows "where Africa is," he added, but wants to contribute to "where it is going" and to craft a "new relationship" built upon the rapid movement toward democracy on the continent.

On March 27 the Bill Clinton administration announced a \$263 billion FY 1994 military budget (a budget 4% lower than that of George Bush!). The more things change, the more they stay the same.

### III. Changes in Southern Africa

Within the region of Southern Africa however, there have been dramatic changes, some of which are linked to the changes previously discussed.

#### **Namibia**

- independence
- mixed economy system

The 1990's began for Southern Africa with Namibia gaining its independence from South African...

#### **Angola**

- withdrawal of Cuban forces in Angola a precursor to the withdrawal of South African forces in Namibia. Thus Namibia gained its independence. Angola, though, was made more vulnerable to the UNITA guerrilla forces in its own country
- cease-fire
- voter registration and turn-out successful
- Savimbi refuses to accept his loss and renews the war
- U.S. recognized the Angolan government, seventeen years after Angolan independence from Portuguese colonialists. The U.S. and South Africa were the only two countries to withhold diplomatic recognition to Angola. U.S. thus acknowledges in a way their loss of influence on Savimbi.
- Angola may be further complicated by the open entry of Zairian Mobutu forces into the military struggles. They are currently engaged with UNITA in intensifying attacks on the oil facilities in the Cabinda area. Such action may lead to a split within the Zairian army, many of whom hate Mobutu and are close to the MPLA



government.

## **South Africa**

- Negotiations between ANC and CP continue and April 27, 1994 is set for multiparty elections, in which blacks can finally participate and vote. Within this context, violence increases as the country arms itself to the teeth. "One settler=one bullet"-- "one negotiator=one bullet!" The slogan shows growing impatience especially among youth with slowness of negotiations.
- Possible dropping of sanctions upon resolution of key outstanding matters like the formation of an interim government.
- Continuing saga of South Africa's nuclear weapons program.
- The assassination of Chris Hani, the leader of the SACP, and the death of Oliver Tambo leave gaps in the ANC leadership. Hani's assassination reveals ultra-conservative plot to kill off those people most influential in changing the face of South Africa.
- The legacy of inequities and problems caused by the very nature of apartheid will now be passed on to the ANC or other heir apparents. This will be the most challenging epoch of the South African struggle; i.e., confronting and resolving the people's problems, r.e., shaping the state they will inherit.

## **Role of the World Bank/IMF**

### The World Bank and IMF as the Pusher Man's Pusher Man

The World Bank and IMF have been banking on Africa's poverty and crisis. British Oxfam says, "World Bank and IMF have been sucking Africa dry!" They have achieved in Africa, the same result which 'redlining' by banks, realtors, mortgagers and insurance firms have done for hundreds of inner-city communities across our country. The policies have led to processes that include:

#### **Weakening of the state**

Impoverishment of the majority-people reduced to cigarette selling and child prostitution one at a time

Physical disintegration-no infrastructure, the educational system and other state systems collapse

Replacement of formal economy with an informal one-child prostitution, corruption rules

#### **Weakening of city management**

Impoverishment of the majority-runaway shops, decline of the manufacturing sector, unemployment

Physical disintegration-fires, abandoned buildings, collapsed streets, no services, no schools

Replacement of the formal economy with an informal one-the dope industry becomes the big employer, corruption rules



Draining of resources-the  
middle class leave and go to  
America

Because of all the above-A  
CLIMATE OF DESPERATION IN  
WHICH VIOLENCE PREDOMINATES

Draining of resources-the  
professionals leave the hood  
and move to Birmingham

Because of all the above-A  
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#### IV. The Peace Process in Mozambique

→ We must remind ourselves to put it all into a historical context. Just as whenever we analyze the violence which youth in our cities face today, we must put such violence into a context of plant closings, globalization, generalized alienation, heightened violence (like the violence and alienation one sees in the film, "Falling Down"), and the commoditization of every aspect of life. As Toni Morrison recently pointed out in a brilliant speech in Chicago:

→ That the balance of life on this planet is solely devoted to the achievement of a world population of buyers, sellers and those who serve them in order to buy, if this current American dream is realized globally, then we will have trashed the experiment called human life, and we will know it because we already know that we sell presidents, sell wars, buy wars. We know that a successful campaign is a successful sales pitch. We know that all media is sale, all information withheld or disseminated is market or marketable...

To trace the origins of the war in Mozambique, one must go back to both the Mozambican and the Zimbabwean wars of independence. After gaining independence from the Portuguese colonists, the new Mozambican government began to support the resistance movement in Zimbabwe (what was then Rhodesia). The white Rhodesian government, in retaliation for this support, created and supported a guerilla force in Mozambique, named the Mozambique National Resistance, or RENAMO by its Portuguese acronym. Its purpose was to destabilize the Mozambican government by destroying infrastructure, especially that of social programs like health clinics and schools.

Upon Zimbabwean independence, the South African government took over the support (supplying, directing and training) for RENAMO, which subsequently became more brutal. With such strong military support from the SA government, RENAMO's terrorism became much more considerable, and the Mozambican government was forced to focus its spending on military forces to protect civilians instead of on education, health and other social programs.



→ On October 15, 1992, the Mozambican government and RENAMO signed a cease-fire agreement in Rome, thus ending a sixteen-year war between the forces. Most of Southern Africa including Mozambique had been struggling within a massive drought. The decimating effects of the war combined with those of the drought are some of the forces which caused the sides to finally agree on a cease-fire. (Mention also the religious contingent which brought the sides together in the first place.)

The legacy of these years are for me symbolized and captured in the 2,000,000 unexplored land mines with which Mozambique has to contend. This is part of a malady for all the 3rd World; 100 million mines in 56 countries.

→ Peace at last...

Finally on October 4, 1992, after two years of a devastating drought, the Mozambican government and RENAMO signed a peace agreement which was solidified by a cease-fire agreement on October 15, 1992.

The peace agreement set up several protocols which outline the peace process. It includes commissions and deadlines for the demobilization of soldiers, the formation of new joint armed forces and police forces, and the election of a new government. The United Nations has a very large role in this process. Essentially, all negotiations are tripartite: the UN, the Mozambican government and RENAMO.

So far in Mozambique, the cease-fire has held, although the peace process has been sluggish. RENAMO president Afonso Dhlakama from the beginning refused to participate in the process until he and his staff were given housing in Maputo. After extended negotiations, RENAMO chief delegate Raul Domingos at a June meeting accepted the "minimum solution" to RENAMO's logistical problems. Namely, the Hotel Cardoso for accommodation and a UN trust fund for money. Plans are also under negotiation for fabrication of new housing for RENAMO (a \$32 million compound is proposed by RENAMO), in order to meet their security needs. Getting money is a big priority for RENAMO and RENAMO leaders have been touring Europe (Dhlakama recently got several million dollars on a trip to Sweden) with Dhlakama expected in the USA any day now. In short, Dhlakama and RENAMO and their sponsors dip in and out of the peace process like suburban shoppers going mall to mall.

Other logistical problems with the peace agreement were also resolved at the June 3 meeting of the Supervision and Control Commission (CFC), which has overall responsibility in monitoring the peace process. RENAMO finally named its delegates to the four peace commissions in charge of demobilizing soldiers,



reintegrating them into civilian life and creating a new military force of both government and RENAMO soldiers. RENAMO is also ready to name its delegates to commissions overseeing the police and the state security services, and to the National Elections Commission. Although these delegates should have been named immediately after the cease-fire was signed, all members of the negotiations are now optimistic that demobilization can now begin.

The UN and the Mozambican government have also resolved some problems which were slowing the peace process. At long last, the United Nations armed troops are all in place, although many of the unarmed observers still have not arrived. And the government and the UN have finally signed a Status-of-Forces agreement defining the relationship between the state and the UN monitoring operation. (The government felt it was losing its sovereignty to the UN, who required unlimited access to all parts of the country and who refused to pay taxes). Elections under UN supervision are now scheduled between June and July of next year.

Yet there are disturbing movements from RENAMO, which still refuses access to areas they hold. RENAMO has interpreted the peace accord as establishing that there are two administrations in Mozambique - the actual government and RENAMO. Although both the UN and the Mozambican government dispute this interpretation, RENAMO continues to limit access to its areas and has begun to appoint its own local administrators, teachers and nurses -- essentially its own civil structure.

Yet in general, there is a feeling of hope in the Mozambican people as they begin to return to their homes and plant their crops. Rainfall this year has been back to normal after two years of drought, increasing food security in the country. Roads long considered dangerous can now be used. And refugees are returning to their homes without any assistance from the UN or NGO's.

#### V. New tasks for the US solidarity movement....

What is ahead for all of us in this period? We have been hit square on the head with this in Chicago when suddenly we learned that Nelson Mandela is to arrive July 6-7 in Chicago. The way the news descended on us, the excluding of the long time activists illustrates, it seems to me, the new era which is upon us.

Indeed, a May article by a well-known US solidarity activist in Southern Africa Report (from Toronto, Canada) asks the powerful question: "Is there a future for solidarity work?" I believe there is and I speak in my individual capacity as a thirty year



veteran in Southern Africa and other solidarity work. I speak as an activist from all fronts. I share with you as one who has long labored under the conviction that the highest form of solidarity we can make is to fundamentally change this country. There is no greater solidarity. There is no greater way to show out love for our own people, which is inseparable and integrally bound to our love for all peoples in the world. Let me say a bit more before delineating some concrete tasks which we have to do.

I think that potentially it is the African-American community which could most completely and pivotally (as we sparked other social movements historically in the USA) rise to meet the challenges we face. The problem is that right now it is latent, it is potential. It is a force which right now is too much based on a mere emotional mobilization. The African American community's affair with Africa is quintessentially romantic.

The challenge is to turn the emotional reservoir of energy that exists within the African-American community into an organized, mobilized, informed mass of projects and mass action on behalf of the people of Africa. The wearing of 'X' has to be translated into organized action based on an informed analysis. That will help turn the African American community into the forefront of an informed citizenry in the United States (Southern Africa REPORT, May 1993, pg. 24.).

That mobilized force is not limited to African Americans, but includes whites, Latinos, Native Americans, Asians, and Pacificers.

What does this mean concretely, dear friends?

1. It means forging new and mutually beneficial alliances. It entails educating and mobilizing new constituencies into a mobilized concern over Africa. We've been, mostly, the church, the African American community, students and 'the Left.' We've got to link to health workers, unionists, educators, business people, anti nuclear, disarmament and conversion forces, environmentalists, academics, development specialists and the US farming community whose crop prices are increasingly propped up by US PL480 export programs. We can no longer negate business developments like the 1000+ African Americans who traveled to Gabon last month for Leon Sullivan's Second African American Summit on bringing African American trade and investment to Africa. We must embrace initiatives like the upcoming trade mission to Namibia planned for this October by the Detroit chapter of Constituency for Africa.
2. It means organizing WESSAs weekend schools on Southern Africa and similar intense teaching/educational outreach ventures.



3. The actualizing of meaningful sister community projects whether based on: A. communities of interest like children and mothers who are the victims of violence (the recent Bosnia base MADRE tour). or B. small micro enterprise and trade exchanges or skills exchanges like the librarians of Detroit working with the librarians of Mozambique; also 3 way partnerships which the Swedes have expressed a willingness to do or C. municipal linkages over concrete problems like policing or waste disposal or infra-structure work.

4. It means dealing flexibly with reinvestment codes of conduct and always consulting with our South American colleagues. [note: ANC will lift sanctions any minute now.]

It is indeed timely to educate and steer the approximately 160 state, local and institutional entities in the USA, towards changing their legislation on sanctions. They should be ready to meet the investment needs of a democratic new government in South Africa, who will swiftly have to address the economic legacy of apartheid.... For your information, some research has been done on Post-Sanctions Business in South Africa prepared by Mannie L. Jackson, senior V.P. of Honeywell and Lawrence Johnson, Dean of Howard University's Business School (Letter from Nelson Mandela to Wayne Fredericks, April 28, 1993).

5. Above all it means re-thinking and retooling ourselves. Note Highlander and Africa Fund thinking about two weekend sessions or 4 day sessions to share about structural adjustment, humanitarian instruction and the UN, World Bank and IMF operations and the US role, AID and its program, small business and trade operations Foreign Debt and Investment, pension funds and pension fund management.

These, my friends, are some of the new arenas in which we must now battle to do solidarity to advance a forward looking, humanitarian and loving agenda.